

MY WATER SMELLS LIKE SWAMP OR BOG WATER

POSSIBLE PROBLEM	HEALTH CONCERN?	OTHER CLUES & CONSIDERATIONS	CONFIRM IT	POSSIBLE FIXES	LICENSE REQUIRED FOR FIX?	STATE FUNDS?	MORE INFO
Sulfur Bacteria See Sulfur Bacteria brochure.	No, sulfur bacteria are not a threat to human health and there is no drinking water standard. Hydrogen sulfide gas can be harmful to humans, but not at the levels produced by bacteria in wells.	Sometimes odors are more noticeable after a period of low water use. There are two types of bacteria that cause odors: sulfur-oxidizing and sulfur-reducing. Hydrogen sulfide gas (produced by sulfur-reducing bacteria) is highly corrosive and can damage plumbing connections, metal piping and well casing. Some sulfur bacteria form deposits that can clog a well screen and pump piping.	Sulfur bacteria samples are difficult to collect and take a long time to analyze. You may wish to have your water tested for iron bacteria instead. Laboratories certified to test for coliform bacteria may also test for iron bacteria. Ask the lab.	Periodic shock chlorination	No, but licensed Well Drillers or Pump Installers have the knowledge and equipment.	No	See Bacteriological Contamination of Drinking Water brochure.
				Increase water heater temperature temporarily and drain tank	No, but do not attempt unless water heater has a pressure relief valve.	No	This will reduce, but not eliminate sulfur bacteria.
				Replace magnesium anode rods in heater with zinc or aluminum rods if the problem appears to be only with the hot water	No, but recommend a licensed plumber.	No	This will reduce, but not eliminate sulfur bacteria.
				Continuous pellet chlorination	Licensed Pump Installers or well owners must install. DNR recommends that license holders install.	No	Requires advance DNR approval. See Pellet Chlorination application .

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Hydrogen sulfide (naturally-occurring)	Not likely at the levels found in groundwater.	Does the water stink when it is drawn directly from the well?	There is no water test for hydrogen sulfide.	Installation of Dept. of Commerce approved water treatment device. <i>Devices are listed under contaminants they will remove.</i>	Yes, treatment devices must be installed by licensed plumbers; or in some cases may be installed by the owner\occupant of a single family private residence. See plumbing license laws .	No	University of Wisconsin Extension National Ground Water Association Water Systems Council Michigan Dept of Environmental Quality